

The Ancient
PRINCIPLE
OF
TRUTH;

Or the *Light Within* Asserted and Held
forth, according to true Experience,
and the Faithful Testimony of
the Scriptures.

Also,

An Appeal to the Witness of God in all
Consciences, which is the More Sure Word
of *Propheſie*, the Testimony of the Scrip-
tures Without, or the Voice and Testi-
mony of the Light and Spirit of God
Within in the Heart.

*By one once greatly Distressed, but now at length
in the Tender Mercy of the Lord, effectually
Viſited and Redcemed, by the Light and Power
of Truth,*

Isaac Pennington.

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THE PREFACE.

THe true Ministers of the Gospel,
 the Ministers of the new Covenant,
 were ordained and appointed by
 God to be Ministers of Light, Ministers of
 Righteousness, Ministers of the Spirit, Mat.
 5. 14. 2 Cor. 11. 15. and Chap. 3. 6.
 And this was their work and service,
 even to preach the Light, to deliver their
 Message concerning the Light, which they
 heard of Christ and were sent by him to
 preach, as is recorded, 1 John 1. 5. so
 that they were to tell men what the Light
 was, and where it was to be found, and to
 turn men from darkness to Light, from sin
 and unrighteousness to purity and righteous-
 ness, from the spirit and power of Satan to
 the Spirit and Power of the living God
 (Dan. 12. 3. Act. 26. 18.) that so they
 might

might come from under Satans authority, power and kingdom of darkness, into the light, wherein Christ reigns as King, Priest and Prophet, unto and over all his : who is faithful in all his House, as Son and Lord of all, distributing Life, Righteousness, Mercy and Peace to his whole Family, as they abide in him and walk in subjection to his Spirit. So that there is no condemnation to them that are gathered unto Christ, engrafted into him, and who abide in him (walking not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit) who is the Quickener, Guide and Rule of all the Children of the new Covenant. For Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life in and to them all, and is made by God all in all unto them. He is their Shepherd, their King, their Captain, their Vine, their Olive Tree, their Leader, their Door, their Path, their Rule, their Righteousness, their Holiness, their Wisdom, their Redemption, their Altar, their Sacrifice, their Priest, their Prophet, their Sabbath, their Light, their Day-spring, their Bright and Morning

Morning Star, their Son, their Shield, their Rock, and their High Tower. What shall I say! God hath gathered together all things into one, even in him, whose Spirit, Life and Light Eternal is the one Substance, which answers all the Figures and Shadows of the Law; and they are all comprehended and fulfilled and end in him. So that he is the end of the Law for Righteousness, to all that believe in him. And he Ministers Righteousness, he Ministers Truth, he Ministers Life, he Ministers Salvation, he Ministers Power, he Ministers Pure Heavenly Wisdom, and no good thing will he withhold, from them that come unto him in the Drawings of his Father, and follow him whithersoever he leads, and obey his Gospel, which is Everlastingly new and living.

Now this precious Ministry hath been withdrawn and hid from Ages and Generations, in the long Night of the great Apostacy and thick Darkness. And how could it be otherwise? for men being in the Dark, and having Erred from the True Spirit, and let

in

in a wrong spirit, and built up wrong Churches, and having not known the True Wilderness (nor being willing to flee into it) whither the True Church fled, and was Nourished by God with the true Food, even with the true living vertue and Nourishment, all this Dark Night of the Apostacy: I say, how could they come at the true Light, the true Spirit, the true Power (from which the true Ministry is) which did not visibly now appear, but was with the true Church in the Wilderness? So that there hath been a true Church all this while, which the Gates of Hell have not been able to prevail against, as to her inward Temple and Altar (nor over the Worshippers which have worship'd therein) although they have gained the outward Court, God having severed it from his inward building, and given it to the Gentiles in spirit, who are not true Jews, who are not Worshippers in the Spirit and in the Truth
 Rev. 21. 1, 2.

But now at length, blessed be the Lord, the long Night of Darkness draws towards

an end, yea is come to an end in many Spirits,
 and the true Light is broken forth again
 (and shineth again inwardly in many) and
 the true Ministry is revived again, and the
 everlasting Gospel (the Everlasting Cove-
 nant of Life, Mercy and Salvation, in
 and through Christ Jesus the Light and
 Life of men) preached again. For now, it
 is not only outwardly read that God is Light:
 But the Message hath been received, and
 persons chosen and sent forth by God to pub-
 lish it, and to turn men from Darkness to
 Light, and from Satans power to God.
 And, blessed be the Lord, the publishing of
 this precious Testimony (in the power and
 authority of the Most High) hath not been
 in vain: but the Captivity of many hath
 been broken by the Power of Light, and the
 power and strength of Darkness (inwardly)
 overturned by it. O how hath the strong
 man which kept the House, before the stronger
 then he appeared in the name and authority of
 his Father, I say, how hath he Trembled at
 the inward and Spiritual Appearance of him
 that

that was stronger than he? and how have
 the pillars of the old building been shaken?
 How hath the witness of God been reached to
 in mens spirits? how have the dead been
 raised, the blind eye opened, the deaf ear
 unstopped, the dumb tongue loosed, the
 Lame caused to leap as an Hart and the
 tongue of the dumb to sing, the inward
 Spiritual Leprosie cleansed and done away
 forever, the wounded healed, the broken-
 hearted bound up: and what hath not the
 Lord done inwardly and spiritually for his
 people, who have been sensible of his appear-
 ance, and gathered by his Spirit and Power
 to the true Shiloh, who is the true Shepherd,
 the Land of the living, the holy City and
 Temple, the Light of the City, the Life
 of the City, the Gates and Wall of the
 City, the King and Kingdom both: for
 his Life, his nature, his Spirit is all and in
 all. Ah what do we desire to have, but
 Christ the Seed, and this Seed sown in our
 Hearts and abiding in us, and his Life righ-
 zeousness and glory, his holy Power Domini-
 on

on and Kingdom springing up in it! And as, in the Apostles days, there was the Seal to their Testimony in peoples hearts, where their Ministry was ordered by the Lord and was received: even so it is now. O how doth the witness answer in mens hearts and Consciences! and they that keep to the witness and its Testimony, not hearkening after words to the wisdom of the flesh, how do they become living Epistles to be seen and read of all men, as the Lord pleaseth to open that eye in any, which can see and read.

Now to be often Testifying of this Light (which the Lord hath visited us with, and wherein we experience the knowledg of his Son, and Redemption by him) to us it is not grievous, and it is good and safe for others. Therefore, it arising in my heart in the springings of Life, and lying upon me (as in the Sight of the Lord) to give forth this further (short) Testimony, for the sakes of such as have any desire to know and experience the Truth as it is in Jesus; I am given up in Spirit to serve my God therein, and do give it forth in humility, in fear, in tenderness of spirit, in true love,
with

with breathings to my God, that he would please to open the hearts of those that shall be inclin'd to read it, that they may feel somewhat of that in themselves from which the Testimony came, & so there-from may hear, in true sense and understanding, the true and good report of the sound of Life and Salvation in this our Age, and may learn so to turn inwardly from the darkness to the Light ; from the power of Satan to Gods Spirit and appearance inwardly, that the arm of the Lord may be revealed in them and powerfully stretched out for them. And this is the precious knowledge of Christ indeed, even to know Christ the Power of God, Christ the Wisdom of God inwardly revealed and working in the heart, destroying sin there, and building up the holy building, wherein he himself will dwell and reign. O that all that truly breath after him, might not be withheld from him (and his living Testimony & inward appearance) by the power of darkness & deceit, which works subtilly in the heart against the appearance, power and work of the Lord there : but might thus come to know him, Amen.

The

The Ancient Principle of Truth,
or the Light Within asserted
and held forth, according to
true Experience and the faith-
ful Testimony of the Scrip-
tures, in the Answers to four
Questions.

1. *What this Light is, which we Testifie
of, and what is the nature of it?*
2. *What it doth inwardly in the heart?*
3. *How it cometh to be lighted, set up and
and increased there?*
4. *How it cometh to be diminished or ex-
stinguished in any?*

Quest.

I.

W

*Hat is this Light
which we so ear-
nestly testifie of,
and whereof we affirm, that all men are (or
have*

*have been) in some measure enlightened by it :
and what is the nature of it ?*

Ans. It is that which shineth from God in thē heart, wherein God is neer to men, and wherein and whereby men may seek after God and find him.

God is a Spirit : and his Spirit and Presence is neer to all men. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy Presence ? (*Psal.* 139. 7. &c.) It is impossible for any so to do. For God, who is a Spirit (and the Father of Spirits) is nigh to every Spirit. Every Spirit depends upon him the Fountain of Spirits, and hath its being, Life and motion from him and in him, after a sence, though not after such a sence, as they who are quickened by him experience.

Now God, who is Light, being so neer every man : doth he never shine upon them ? They are **Darkness** :
but

but doth he never appear in the darkness? He who is Light loveth Man-kind: doth he never visit them with his love? He knoweth what and how great inward and spiritual Enemies Man-kind hath: doth he never make any discoveries of their Enemies to them? Yes; The Light is neer all Man-kind to discover to them and help them against the darkness: and the love is neer to help them against the enmity which destroyeth, and so to save them. For whosoever joyneth to the Light of Gods Spirit, cannot but witness Salvation thereby: for it is of a saving nature, and bringeth Salvation with it to all that receive it. Christ is in it, and is known by it (inwardly, spiritually, livingly known) and he is not nor can be known without it. He that knoweth the Light of Gods Spirit, knoweth Christ; and he that believeth in it, believeth in him: and he that knoweth not nor believeth therein, neither knoweth nor believeth in Christ.

Christ. So that as the *Jews* circumcision outward, and their knowledge and thinking to be justified by the righteousness and works of the Law (which most of them brake and were Transgressors of, though *Paul* said, he was *touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless*) I say, as this was disowned and denyed by Christ and his Apostles, and the circumcision and work of God on the hearts of the Gentiles set over it, and exalted above it: (as *Rom. 2.*) So is it now also. The knowledge of those, and belief of those who own the Light and believe in the Light, is owned by God's Spirit (in this our day) for the true believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for that knowledge which is life eternal: and the knowing and believing on him, as men account it, according to their apprehensions of the Letter, without this, is reckoned with God for ignorance and unbelief.

So that, in this is God known, in
this

this is Christ believed in. Here God draws nigh to every man, and is a God not afar off, but nigh at hand; and his Salvation is nigh, and his Righteousness ready to be revealed here: and here every man may seek after and obtain the knowledge of him, the saving knowledge, the knowledge of the Grace, of the Gift of Grace which brings Salvation. In this is the Son kissed, in this is he drawn nigh to, and come to by the Soul, and not out of it. Here are the drawings of the Father felt. Let any man feel this, he feels that which begets to God: he feels that which comes from the Son, is of the nature of the Son, wherein the Father draws (the heart of the Child whom he begets) to the Son. And in this the Soul comes: it comes out of the darkness wherein Christ is not nor dwells, into the Light wherein Christ is with the Father: and so in this the Soul is ever neer, and out of

it still afar off. In this is the holy root witnessed, and the ingrafting thereinto : out of this the holy Root is not known, nor can men understand what it is to be ingrafted into him, and how he is an Olive Tree, a Vine, a Door, a Shepherd, a Leader, a Captain, a Redeemer. Nor can men possibly know the voice of the true Shepherd, from the voice of a Stranger, till they come hither ; nor how the true Shepherd walks before his Sheep, and what it is to follow him out of that which destroys, into that which regenerates, makes new and living, till they come hither.

Now this inward Light is abundantly testified of in the Scriptures.

As first by Moses, who speaking of the other Covenant, the new Covenant, the Covenant of Circumcising the Heart, turneth or directeth the mind

to this Word or Commandment nigh,
whereby alone it can be done, as *Dent.*

30. And this was the reason, why
God so often commanded the *Jews*
to circumcise their hearts, and to wash
them and make them clean, from their
wicked wayes and vain thoughts, be-
cause *Moses* had directed their minds to
that, and that was near to them, where-
in and whereby it might be done. In
another place, he bids them make
them a new heart, *Ezek. 18. 31.* how
could that be done? Why, by turning
to Gods Spirit which strove with them,
his Power would effect it in them :
and men are said to purifie their hearts,
through the Spirit, in loving and obey-
ing the Truth which doth it, *1 Pet. 1.*

22. *Joh. 17. 17.*

adly, by *Joh*, who speaks of Gods
Candle shining upon his Head, and of
walking through Darknes by his
Light, *Chap. 29. 30.* He speaks like-

wise of those that rebel against the Light, that know not the wayes thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof, *Chap. 24. 13.*

3dly, By *David*, who by it saw through the types and shadows to the substance, and grew wiser then his Teachers, he knowing the Word within, and having his Candle lighted by it, so that he knew the inward Law which converts the soul, and was led by Gods Light and Truth shining in his inward parts, *Psal. 43. 3.*

4thly, By *Solomon*, The Commandment is a Lamp, and the Law Light, and the reproofs of instruction the way of Life, *Prov. 6. 23.* Every one that experienceth the Light, the Law, the Commandment within, knoweth it to be thus. Again, saith he, *The Path of the just is as the shining Light, that shineth more*

more and more unto the perfect day, Chap. 4. 18. Just as a Light, which shines outwardly, is to the outward man: such is the inward Light to the inward man; ye more: for inwardly, the Light and the Way is all one. Christ is the way, the Truth and the Life, which are three names of one and the same thing. And he that walks in the Light, walks in the way of Life and Holiness; which he that walks in the darkness, walks out of. I shall mention but one place more, which is very differently rendred, it is Chap. 20. 27. The new Translation renders it thus, *The Spirit of man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* The Old thus, *The Light of the Lord is the breath of man, and searcheth all the bowels of the belly.* The heart of man, (the unregenerate mind, the unregenerate spirit) is deceitfull above all things and desperately wicked:

that whereby God searcheth it, is his Light, his Candle, his own Holy Spirit.

5thly, By the Prophets, as *Iſaiah*, *Jeremy*, *Ezekiel*, *Micah*, &c. who ſaid, *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to Love mercy, and to humble thy ſelf to walk with thy God* Chap. 6. 8. How doth God ſhew this to mankind, but by the inward Light of his Spirit.

6thly, By *John Baptiſt*, who was the fore-runner, and testified of Chriſt as of the inward and ſpiritual Baptizer, who had his Fan in his hand: what is that? What doth Chriſt Fan with? What doth he fan, and with what? The Light within is a Fan, the Spirit within, is a Spirit of Judgment and burning: it ſcatters the darkneſs, yea

his
oly
it consumes and burns up the Dross
and Stubble there.

7thly, By Christ himself, who said,
*This is the condemnation, that Light is
come into the World, and men loved dark-
ness rather than Light, because their deeds
were evil,* John 3. 19. Mark how
Christ preached the Light (the Seed,
the Kingdom, the Leaven) and bid
men bring their deeds to it, and blamed
them that did not, *ver. 20. 21.* How
can there be an inward *Few*, an inward
Circumcision, without an inward Law,
inward Light, an inward Testimony?
and to this inward Law and Testimony,
must the inward *Few* daily have re-
course, and bring his deeds thither, to
be judged and scanned there. Again,
Christ saith, *I am the Light of the World:
he that followeth me, shall not walk in dark-
ness, but shall have the Light of Life,*
Chap. 8. 12. How is Christ the Light
of

of the World, or how was Christ the Light of the World? . Was he only so, as he appeared in that body of flesh? Is he not so in his inward and spiritual appearance? Is he not the Universal Light, the Son of Righteousness, which enlighteneth the whole dark World? Yet again he saith, *Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the Children of light,* Chap. 12. 35. 36. This is Christs direction to men how they may become true Believers, to wit, by believing in the Light. The Light shines in the darkness (*ye were darkness*) and by believing in it, men become Children of it.

8thly, By the Apostles, and Evangelists. They were sent to turn men from Darkness to Light, *Acts. 26. 18.* and they

they testified of the Light they were to turn men to: delivered their message that God was Light, and that in him was no darkness at all. They preached Christ the Light, the Life, the Way, the Truth. They turned men from Satans spirit which is darkness, to Gods Spirit which is Light.

John the Evangelist testified of the Word which was in the beginning; and said, In him was life, and the Life was the Light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not, Chap. 1. 4, 5. And again saith, speaking of him, That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, vers. 9.

Paul saith, whatsoever doth make manifest is Light, Ephes. 5. 3. Wherefore Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead (vers. 14.) for God hath sent forth the Light of his Son to rouse thee.

thee. Again, he professedly averreth, that the word nigh in the mouth and heart, was that Word of Faith which he preached, *Rom. 10. 8.* If so, then that is the Word of faith which is to be believed in, if men would believe in Christ and be saved by him.

James speaketh of God as the father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect Gift proceedeth, *Chap. 1. 17.* Then surely from him is the Grace, and the Gift (the free Gift) by Grace, which is upon all to Justification of life, that receive it and follow the teachings of it.

Peter speaks of the more sure word of prophesie, to which men should take heed; and wait, in taking heed to that, for the dawning of the day, and the arising of the Day-Star in the heart, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* Indeed, all men ought to wait for, and give heed to the Light of
God's

God's holy Spirit, and the holy Prophecies, Warnings and Directions thereof in their hearts.

And *John*, at last as I may say, in that Book of the Revelation (closing up the Testimony of that Age and Generation) speaks of walking in the Light of the Lamb, *Chap. 21. 23, 24.* (which every one that comes to witness the true Light, ought to do, else there is no true fellowship with God, nor with his Sanctified Ones, who are gathered into and walk in the Light, even as God is in the Light, *1 John 1. 7.*) And the Angel that opened the Prophecies and Mysteries of that Book to *John*, said, that *the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecie*, (*Chap. 19. 10.* So then, he that hath this Spirit of Prophecie, he that hath this inward Light, hath the Testimony of Jesus: but he that hath it not, hath not the Testimony it self, but only words

words concerning the Testimony. For this is the **Distinction** between the true Believer and the False: The true Believer hath the Spirit of Prophecie, the Witness in himself, (1 *John* 5. 10.) the False Believer hath but the Outward Testimony or Relation of things, but not the Inward Substance, the Covenant and Law of Life within.

Quest. **W**^{Hat} doth this Light do
 2. ^{inwardly in the Hearts}
 of those that receive it, believe in it and
 give up to it?

Ans. It doth all that is requisite to be done, from the Souls coming out of Spiritual *Egypt* into the Land of Rest; and all that is needful for its Growth and Preservation there.

First, it Enlighteneth. It sheweth what is Evil, and also what is Good,
 according

according to the Measure and Proportion of it, and according to Gods causing it to Shine in the Heart. It Discovers the Myſtery of Darkneſs, the Myſtery of Ungodlineſs, the Myſtery of Iniquity, the Myſtery of Deceit in all its Myſterious Workings: for nothing is hid from the Light of him with whom we have to do. And it alſo diſcovers the Myſtery of Godlineſs, the Myſtery of Holineſs, the Pure Way and Commandment of Life; and gives all the Believers (the True Believers in Chriſt) this Experience, That *his Commandment is Life Everlaſting*. There is nothing the heart needs deſire to know of God, but this makes it manifeſt, in the due ſeaſon. It opens the very Myſtery of the Scriptures, gives the right Underſtanding and application of the Promiſes, and fulfils the Propheſies thereof in the heart.

2dly, It doth not only manifeſt the
good

good and evil, but likewise inclines the mind to chuse the good and refuse the evil. It draws from the evil and towards the good: yea, and the soul is made willing in the day of him who is light, and who appears in the light, and reveals his power there. There is a way, an high way spoken of *Jsa.* 35.8. called the way of holiness, which the unclean can neither discern nor pass over to: but the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ, the measure of Grace and Truth wherewith he enlightens men, so manifests and leads into this way, that they that are taught and guided by him shall walk therein and not err.

3dly, It scatters the darkness, breaks the power of the enemy; it makes one with him who is all power, and giveth to partake thereof, so that power is given to become sons, in the Light, to the Children of the Light: power given to become Kings and Priests to
God:

God: power given to reign in the dominion of his Life, in the dominion of his Truth, over sin, over death, over deceit; and to offer up the holy living sacrifices to God.

What shall I say? It is one with Christ, it is of his heavenly Spirit and Nature, it makes way for him, it leads to him, it fills with him, it brings into unity and fellowship both with the Father and the Son, where the peace which passeth understanding, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory abounds. This is the Gospel-message, that God is Light: and they that are gathered into and abide in this Light, they are gathered into and abide in unity and fellowship, both with the Father and the Son.

David had great sense, and great experience of this Light of Gods holy Spirit, & of his Truth sent forth, manifested and revealed in his inward parts, as is signified, *Psal. 51. 6.* and again

in that vehement Prayer of his, Psal. 43. 3. *Send out thy Light and thy Truth ; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacles. Then will I go unto the Altar of God, unto God the gladness of my joy : yea, upon the harp will I Praise thee, O God, my God.* Indeed when the Light shines and the Truth springs up in the heart, it leads to him that is true, it leads to the Holy Hill and Mountain of the Lord and to the Inward Altar which they have no Right to who serve and worship at the outward ; and the Harp is known whereon the Most High is Praised, even that Inward Harp, whereof Davids outward Harp was but the Figure. Therefore they that come to the Holy Hill of God, to the Mountain of the Lord's House, and to that Holy building which is reared there, they invite and encourage others to walk in that Light which led them thither, wherein Communion with God

God and one with another, and the Blessings of Life and Peace are Enjoyed, *Isa. 2. 3.*

But what should I speak of the Sufficiency of the Light and Grace of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; or of what it is able to do, and of what he is pleased to work by it? I shall only say this: that as the Fulness was enough for Christ, and to fit him for the Work which he had to do: so the measure of Grace and Truth which he bestows, is enough for every man. *My Grace is Sufficient for thee*, said God to *Paul*: and so it is for every man. There is no Want of Sufficiency in the Grace of God, in the Seed of the Kingdom, in the Pearl of Price, in the Holy Leaven, in the Heavenly Salt; but the Vertue and Strength of it is Greater, then the Enemy is able to withstand: and he that keeps ~~and~~ departs not from it, shall feel

C

Life

Life and Power springing up in it, to quicken him and carry him through all that God requires of him. For the Water which Christ gives is a Well, springing up (in him to whom it is Given) unto Life Eternal : and this Water is able to Wash, able to Nourish, able to Fill the Soul with Living Vertue, which waiteth for it and partaketh of it. And all the Nations of them that are saved, are to walk in the Light of God's Spirit. To this men are to be turned, unto this they are to be gathered, into this they are to be Translated (even from the Kingdom of Darknes, into the Sons Marvellous Light) and being changed by it (into its Nature) become Light in the Lord, and ought to walk in the Light, as God is in the Light. 1 *John* 1. 7.

Quest.

Quest. **H**ow doth the Mind come to
 3. be Enlighted, and the Can-
 dle of the Lord come to be set up in the
 Soul ?

Ans. By God's causing it to shine
 there, and the minds being turned to
 it and given up to be exercised by it,
 as it pleaseth the Lord to cause it to
 shine.

The Power of the Lord reacheth to
 the pure Principle of Life and Light
 in the heart, in the seasons of his good
 Pleasure. This being reached to and
 touched by the Lord, answers his
 touch, his visit, his call : and the
 mind being turned to it, sensible of
 it, and willing to let it into its nature
 and spirit, and to become one with it,
 (suffering with it and bearing its
 Cross ;) the Seed cometh to grow
 there, the Light which was hid and

overwhelmed under the Earth (under the earthly Wisdom, the earthly Will, the earthly Knowledge, the earthly Desires, the Earthly Delights, &c.) cometh to be lighted up there, yea the life cometh to be quickened more and more, and the holy Leaven to spread more and more there. And this sensible Plant of God's Renown being thus entertained, and being not afterwards grieved, dispised, quenched or hurt, by the giving way to and letting in of that which is contrary to it, it shooteth up into a Kingdom of Righteousness, into a Tree of Righteousness, within the compass hereof and under the shadow whereof the Soul sitteth down in Peace and Rest, and is defended and nourished with that which is pure and living, and full of the pure Sap and Vertue; and so becomes strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, against the power and strength
of

of darkness. Now this all men may experience, (at first in some low measure and degree, and afterwards more and more) as they come to feel after, and have a sense of that which is of God and good in the heart, and come to joyn and give up to it. For then it will be working against and purging out that which is of a contrary nature, and overspreading the heart with its own Nature : insomuch as, that which was the least, will become the greatest ; and that which was the lowest of all (and indeed trampled under foot) will rise up into Dominion and Power over all, and bring all under. So that the lofty City, the lofty building of fleshly Wisdom, and of Sin and Iniquity in the heart, will be laid low ; and the feet of the Seed shall tread it down, even the feet of that which was once poor and needy, until it was anointed, and its Horn exalted by the Lord.

Quest. **H**ow is the Light or Candle of
 4. the Lord diminished, and
 at length extinguished or put out in some?
 or how cometh that about?

Ans^r. By their neglecting, despising, quenching it, hearkening and giving way to the contrary spirit in its Motions and Temptations. For as the Good, let in, stops and works out the Evil: so the Evil let in stops and works out the Good. So the *Philistine*-nature, given way to, stops the inward Well, which *Jacob* had digged and opened. There is a time wherein Life is a Mystery, a Fountain sealed; and there is a time wherein God unseals the Fountain and opens the Mystery in the heart. O then great care is to be had, and the Soul is to lie very low in the pure Fear, that it may continue in his Goodness, and walk
 worthy

worthy of his Love, that the Fountain may be kept open, and the pure Springs of the holy Land flow, and not be sealed and shut up again. For there are some that rebel against the Light, and they dwell in a dry Land. There were some that did alwayes resist and vex God's Spirit, and the Lord's Spirit ceased striving with them, and gave them up to a reprobate sense and judgement concerning the things of God. There are some that do not improve God's good Talent, and from them that which was once given, is again taken away. Yea the Candle of the Wicked shall one time or other be put out, and they shall be silent in darkness, and their Mouth stopped from having any thing to say against God, his Truth and People for evermore. And all men had need to take heed, how they be wanton with the Grace of God, or despise the day of their visitation

tation by the holy Light of God's Spirit : for if God take away the Talent, if God put out the inward Candle, who can light it again ? O how did poor *David*, the man after God's own Heart suffer, by letting the Enemy's temptations in upon him, *Cast me not away from thy Presence, said he, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.* Indeed he did lose his condition at the present, and he speaks as a man in danger of being quite undone ; though afterwards he came to Comfort and Assurance, that God would restore to him the Joy of his Salvation, and light his Candle and enlighten his Darkneſs again.

But I am not insensible of what doubts and disputes there are in mens minds, about this Testimony which we give (from certain knowledge and true experience) concerning the Light, wherewith God enlighteneth Souls. At first, when the Testimony first
came

came forth, men would not grant such a thing, as a Light from God in men; which convinced of and reprov'd for Sin. But now there are many will assent to that, who yet cannot believe it to be a Measure of the Grace and Truth which comes by Jesus Christ, and that in it the Sufficiency and Power of God is revealed against the strength and power of Satan. But let such seriously consider.

First, who they are that have testified and testifie of this Light? They are Persons who, generally, have been deeply exercised in Religion: Persons, who have read the Scriptures very diligently, with much praying and waiting upon God for the true, certain and clear understanding of them: Persons, who (several of them) have had experience of most (if not all other) separated Wayes; but could never meet with the Answer
of

of the Cry of their Souls , nor with Satisfaction to that Birth, which breathed in them after the Lord, night and day.

2dly , What their Testimony is, which is manifold, as first, That they were by the Lord (even by his holy Spirit, and the shinings and springings of his precious Seed in them) turned to this light, and shewn it to be of God. 2dly, That in turning to it, they still met with the Presence, Appearance, and Power of the Lord working in their hearts. 3dly, That it did not only discover Sin to them, but also powerfully resist it, fight against it and bring it under; which no light and power, besides the Light and Power of God's Spirit can do. 4thly, That the Life of the Son is manifested and revealed in it, and they come therein truly to see, and taste and handle the Word of eternal Life. 5thly, That in this Light they come to witness cleansing

sing by the Blood of the Lamb, and
 the everlasting Covenant made with
 them (even the sure Mercies of *David*)
 and the holy and precious Promises
 fulfilled in them, whereby they are
 made Partakers of the divine Nature,
 and come to witness an enterance into
 the holy City, and drink of the
 Streams of the pure Chrystal River,
 which refresh and make glad the City
 of our God, and all the Tabernacles
 wherein he dwels. Lastly, to menti-
 on no more, the Lord hath shewn
 them, how this had been formerly
 with them, even in the dayes of their
 former Profession; and how God had
 wrought by this in them in former
 times, though they then knew it not;
 and that all their Ability then to un-
 derstand any thing of God aright, or
 to pray unto him, or reap any true
 benefit from the Scriptures, was
 through the stirring of this in them,
 whereby God even then in some mea-
 sure

sure enlightened and quickened their minds. For, there being such a Principle in man, it works variously, and many times when he is not aware of it: and he hath benefit thereby, if he resist it not, but receive its influence and operation, though he hath not the distinct knowledge and discerning of it.

3dly, Again consider, Whether the Light of Christs Spirit, or the Grace and Truth which is by Jesus Christ, hath not this property of discovering, convincing and reproving for sin? Doubtless the Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, in the lowest Ministration of it, is of that nature that it discovereth, and fighteth against the Law of sin and death, wherever it finds it. And whether the Comforter, the holy Spirit of Truth, who leads out of all Error and Falshood and into all Truth, is not as well to be known by this, even by his convincing

vincing the world of sin, and inwardly reprov-
ing for sin, as by his comfort-
ing of the Saints, in their holy
Travels out of sin and Battels against
sin?

Consider 4thly, Whether any
thing can convince of sin, but the
Light of God's holy Spirit shining in
the heart? There may be an outward
Declaration of sin by the Law out-
ward; but it never reacheth the
heart and Conscience, but by the
shining of the Light inward: Nay,
it cannot so much as reach to the un-
derstanding, but as God opens the
heart, and brings home the convicti-
on by his Light and Power. This
we have experience of in the *Jews*,
who though the Prophets came with
certain evidence and demonstration
from God's Spirit, yet they were not
convinced thereby, but stood it out
against the Prophets, and justified
themselves against the Voice and
Word.

Word of the Lord, their Eyes being closed, their Ears shut and Hearts hardened against that of God in them, as may be read in *Jeremiah*, *Chap. 2.* and in divers other places, even to Admiration. And what wickedness is so great, which the hardened man will not plead for, and be defending and justifying himself in? Yea, if God do open mens understandings in some measure, so that they cannot but confess such and such things to be evil in general (as Pride, covetousness, drunkenness, riotousness, excess in apparel, lying, swearing, &c.) yet they are not able to see the evil and danger of these things in and to themselves, but have covers and excuses to hide them, unless the inward Light and Spirit of the Lord search their hearts, and make them manifest to them.

5thly, Consider the weight and proper tendency of these two Scriptures,
and

and do not form another meaning, and so put off the drift and intent of God's holy Spirit in them. The first is that of the Apostle, Ephes. 5. 13. 14.

But all things that are reprov'd, are made manifest by the Light : For whatsoever doth make manifest, is Light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, &c.

Every man is bid to Awake, because every man hath some proportion of that in him, which (if hearkened to) will reprove, rouse up and awaken him, and lead him from among the dead, to him who gives the Light and causeth it to shine in him, even in the midst of his darkness and corruption, that it might awaken him out of it.

The other Scripture is that of Gal. 5. 17. where the Apostle speaks of the Flesh its lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and that these two are contrary. Did not God's Spirit strive with the old World: not only with the Sons of God, who had

had corrupted themselves, but with the rest also? And what is it that hath striven with wicked men since, and that doth strive with wicked men still? Is it not the same good Spirit? What is it also that inwardly resists and lusts against the Will and strivings of God's Spirit? Is it not Flesh? So here are the two Seeds, the two Principles (which are contrary one to the other) near man. For there is the Creature man (which of right is the Lords) into whom the Destroyer hath gained entrance, and in whom he rules by the Law of Sin and Death. Now, he who made man seeketh after him, and findeth out his Enemy in man, and giveth forth a Law against him inwardly in the heart: which so far as any man gives ear to, believes and receives, there ariseth presently a fight and striving between these two contrary Principles in him, so that ~~this man~~ cannot do the things that he

he would. Now that which thus strives against sin in any man, and troubles him because of sin, reprov- ing and condemning him for it; that is of another nature then the Flesh, (which harbours sin) and contrary to it.

Lastly, consider the great love of God to mankind, and the great care he hath of them. First, as touching their Bodies. How doth he provide for the Bodies of all mankind ! He would have none hurt, none destroyed, but feedeth all, nourisheth all, making plentiful provision and giving fruitful seasons, causing his Sun to shine and his Rain to descend on all. Then, as to their Souls : He knoweth the preciousness thereof, and what the loss of a Soul is : yea he knoweth how eager the Devourer is to destroy, and setteth himself against him. He is the Father of Spirits, and his Son the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls,
D whole

whose nature it is to gather and save ; and it is said expresly of God, by the Testimony of the Spirit of Truth, that he would have all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. And whereas it was said to the *Jews*, that God was as the Potter, and they as the Clay ; and he could make them Vessels either of honour or dishonour at his pleasure , *Jer.* 18. 6. yet it was said to this end, even to invite and incourage them to be subject to him, that they might be made Vessels of honour by him , as appears *ver.* 11.

Now consider ; If God be as tender of souls, as of the bodies of men ; doth he not make provision for the soul, as well as for the body ? Would he not have the soul live, and would he not have the soul fed, as well as the body ? If so : then needs must the light of his holy Spirit shine inwardly throughout all Nations, and the

the saving Grace and Power be manifest everywhere, even in every heart, in some measure, and the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God (which is the souls food) be distributed to all. And truly, the Lord is not an hard Master to any, (as the unprofitable Servant, in every Dispensation, is ready to account of him:) for the times of ignorance and darkness God winketh at or passeth over, being very tender towards men in that estate: yea, a little that is of him, turned to and heeded, according to the Measure of Understanding that God gives, will be owned and accepted, even in the midst of a great deal of Darkness and evil-working against it.

There was a time before the Law (for the Law was given by *Moses*) what saved then? Was it any thing but the saving Grace, the saving Light, the saving Spirit, the holy

D 2 Anointing?

Anointing? Could any be saved, but thereby?

What saved under the Law? Did the Shadows then save, or the Substance of Life vailed under them? Did not the Spirit then work inwardly, redeem inwardly, save inwardly? Did not the Word or Commandments nigh in the mouth and heart (to which *Moses* by Gods direction had turned their minds) enlighten and save inwardly?

And any of the Gentiles, as this Word or Spirit of Life did work in them, did it not circumcise inwardly and save them also? So that though they had not the Law or Ministration of *Moses* outward, yet they had the inward Writing from God on their hearts, and shewed the work and efficacy of it there, and shall at last be justified by and according to the everlasting Gospel, which justifieth all whatsoever, so far as in any measure
they

they receive and are subject to the Light and Law of Gods pure Spirit, which the carnal mind cannot receive nor be subject to.

O that men could dye to themselves, even to their own wisdom and prudence, and not lean to their own understandings, nor idolize their own apprehensions and conceivings, but wait to receive understanding from God, who giveth liberally of the true Wisdom, to those that ask and wait aright ! And how doth God give true Wisdom and Understanding ? Is it not by the shining of his Light in the heart ? O that men were turned inwardly thither, and inwardly dead to that wisdom and prudence from which God ever hid things and ever will. He that will be truly wise, must first become a Fool, that he may be wise : that is, He must not strive to learn in the comprehensive way of mans wisdom and prudence the things of Gods Kingdom, but feel
the

the begettings of life in his heart, and in that receive somewhat of the new & heavenly Understanding, and so dye to the other, & know no more the things of God after the flesh, that is, as a wise man, as a learned Scribe, as a great Disputant (for where is the Wise? where is the Scribe? where is the Disputer of this World? Can they find out the mystery of life, the Mystery of Gods Kingdom in this Age, any more then they could in former Ages?) but become a Babe, a Fool, and so receive and bow to that which his own wisdom will call foolishness, and account weakness, but the other Birth which is begotten and born of God, will know and daily experience to be the Wisdom and Power of God unto Salvation.

An APPEAL to the Witness
of God in all Consciences;
which is the More Sure Word
of Propheſie, the Teſtimony
of the Scriptures *Without*, or
the Voice and Teſtimony of
the Light and Spirit of God
Within in the Heart.

THE Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaks of a more
ſure word of Propheſie (or of a
more ſure propheticall word, as the
Greek hath it) then that voice which
came from Heaven, which they heard,
when they were with Chriſt in the ho-
ly Mount, 2 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. Now
what this more ſure word is, which
ought to be given heed to in the moſt
eſpecial manner, more then to ſuch

an eminent Voice and Testimony from Heaven, even from the excellent Glory, it is a very great and weighty Question. Now some affirm that it is the word and testimony of the Scriptures without, others affirm that it is the voice, sound and testimony of the Word of Life within.

I do not know a Scripture that my heart hath been more tenderly solicitous about, desiring to give due honour both to the Spirit of God and to the holy Scriptures, and also to understand what the Lord would have me in the most especial manner give heed to, until the season came from him, in which he should cause the Day to dawn and the Day-Star to arise in my heart. And now that others might come to the same understanding and satisfaction also, are these following Considerations proposed in the weight of my Spirit to them.

First,

First, consider how sure the Word of Propheſie was, how ſure the Voice and Teſtimony from Heaven was, then which the Apoſtle directs them to ſomewhat as more ſure. This I may clearly ſay of it, It was undoubtedly from God, and that in a very extraordinary manner, even in Chriſts preſence, when *Moses* and *Elias* were with him, and God beſtowing upon him honour and glory, tranſfiguring him before his Diſciples, cauſing his face to ſhine as the Sun, and making his Raiment white as the Light, *Mat.* 17. 2. And the intent of it was to give the Diſciples full evidence and ſatisfaction (for the Voice was not for his ſake, but for theirs) or rather that they might have a full ground, after his death and reſurrection, to teſtify for the ſatisfaction and confirmation of others: for till then, they were to keep it ſecret, *ver. 9.* Now that
which

which was thus provided for this end, doubtless it was very sure, testified by them who were chosen to be faithful Witnesses in this respect.

adly, Consider, Whether the Testimonies of the Prophets concerning Christ were surer, then this immediate Voice from God himself? Were they surer to those that lived in those dayes, or to those that should come after, then this Testimony was to the Apostles and to those they did communicate it in the Will and Counsel of the Lord? The Prophets did testifie from Gods holy, unerring Spirit: but they that lived in those dayes, did not alwayes believe and receive their Prophecies, but sometimes doubted of them and questioned them; yea their Prophecies were not alwayes evident and clearly understood by those who desired to understand, but their Visions were many times a

Book sealed, both to the learned and unlearned. But this Testimony, this Word of Propheſie, this Voice from the excellent Glory (*This is my beloved Son, hear him*) is a very plain, evident, full Testimony, eaſie to be underſtood by any in that preſent or in after Ages : and I muſt confeſs, as to my ſelf, the reading of it did alwayes deeply affect and ſatiſfie my heart.

3dly, Conſider the manner of Gods appearing to the Prophets, and compare it with the manner of this Appearance. God appeared to them ſometimes in Viſions, ſometimes in Dreams. *Moses* ſaw a Buſh burning, and heard a Voice. *The Viſion of Iſaiah the ſon of Amos*, *Iſa. 1. 1.* and *Ezekiel* ſaw Viſions, *Chap. 1. 1.* and *Daniel* had a Dream and Viſions on his Bed, *Dan. 7. 1.* And *Jeremiah* had that ſweet Propheſie (of Gods ſatiating the weary ſoul, and replenishing every ſorrowful

sorrowful soul) in his sleep; *Fer. 31. 26.* Now here, to these blessed Apostles, was a Vision given of the glory of Christ, and of *Moses* and *Elias* with him; not in the mind or head, as *Daniels* Visions were, *Dan. 7. 1.* but the excellent glory did appear, and Christ, *Moses* and *Elias* were really there together on the mount (which is more then a prophetick Vision of a thing) and Christ was cloathed with and swallowed up in the glory. For God the Father did set himself to honour and glorifie him so, as never man was glorified before; and the Voice came (the certain Voice: What Voice cou'd be more certain?) from the excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,* *2 Pet. 1. 17.* And this pure Vision of Glory (even of Gods thus appearing, and Christs thus transfiguring) they saw, and heard the Voice which came from Heaven, when they were with him

him in the holy Mount. Now were the Prophecies of the Prophets that Christ should be born in *Bethlehem*, and that he should be thus and thus, &c. equal to this in evidence and demonstration. Why was *John* greater then the rest of the Prophets? Was it not in that he was chosen to be the immediate Fore-runner and Preparer of the Way, and could point with his finger to the *Messiah*? And yet, is not this immediate testimony from the excellent Glory, greater then the testimony of *John*?

4thly, Consider, Whether Christs own Words, in the Flesh, to his Disciples, were surer then this Voice from the excellent Glory? If I should extol the Words of Christ in the Flesh, above the words of the Prophets which testified of him, should I therein do the words and testimonies of the Prophets any wrong? He was
the

the Son, he had the fulness of Life, the fulness of the Spirit, the great authority and vertue of God his Father. God (saith the Apostle) *who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last dayes spoken unto us by his Son.* (Hebr. 1. 1, 2.) seeming to exalt and magnifie Gods speaking by his Son, and the Way of this Ministration above the Ministration of the Prophets (which Ministration was first by him in flesh, afterwards in Spirit, which is properly called the Ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 8.) Now consider, whether this sure word of Prophecie from the excellent Glory, so immediately from the Majesty on High, was not intended by him as a seal to the Faith of the Disciples, as a seal to Christ's appearance in Flesh, and to what he had taught them (which was sometimes in Parables, and not so fully understood

stood by them ;) and whether this was not more bright, more ravishing, more certain, more establishing, then his common Presence and Appearance among them, and then the words which he from the Father, not the Father so immediately himself spake to them ? For that which is given to confirm a thing, is (in order of nature and for evidence sake) more certain and clear, then that which it is given to confirm.

5thly, Consider, Whether the Voice of Gods Spirit and Light within, in the heart, be not more clear and certain to him that hears it, then any Word or Testimony from without ? Is it not a surer Word of Prophecy, then this Relation or Testimony of the Apostles, of what they heard from the excellent Glory : yea is it not surer then any Testimony

mony of the Scriptures, or then all outward Testimonies put together.

6thly, Consider, Whether they who are turned from Darkness to the Light, even to the inward Manifestation of Gods holy Spirit, ought not to give diligent heed unto it, until the day dawn and the Day-Star arise in their hearts.

Lastly, Consider, What is the difference between this Light shining (as a Word of Prophecie) in the dark place, and the day dawning and the Day-Star arising in the heart? Is it not the same Light, only further revealed and shining in it's glory, in the holy and pure place?

The Apostle *Paul* excellently openeth the thing, *Coloss. 1. 25. 26, 27.* First he speaketh of the Word in general, which he was to fulfil, or
fully

fully to preach. Then he sheweth how this Word is a Mystery, hid in the Gentiles (for so the *Greek vers.* 27. is) even in them that believe not; the Word is nigh there, the Instruction and Commandment of Life nigh there. But, in those that receive the Grace, and believe in the Light, and so become children of the Light, and walk in the Light as God is in the Light; in them Christ is risen, and they are risen together with him, and he is in them the hope of glory. So that the day hath dawned, there the Day-Star hath arisen; and they know not only a Measure of Grace from Christ, but Christ himself arisen, dwelling, living, acting, walking in them, and they in him.

Let these things be duly considered of and equally weighed in the holy Ballance, and then I dare appeal to every serious and sober heart and mind, Whether the inward Light, the in-

ward Word, the word nigh in the mouth and heart, and the holy living testimony thereof, the voice of the **Witness** within, of the Propheſie within, be not ſurer to that man that hath it, and hears and knows the voice of it, then any outward voice or testimony whatſoever :

Object. But ſome may object thus, or after this manner. I am ſatisfied that there is a Word nigh in the mouth and heart (to which Moſes did direct the Jews, and the Apoſtles the Chriſtians) and that this word doth enlighten the mind, and doth ſeparate in the month between words and words, and is a ſwift Witneſs againſt the bad words, and a Juſtifier of the good words, which come from the truth and uprightneſs of the heart, and are ſeaſoned with grace. I alſo believe that this Word is quick and powerful in the heart, ſeparating and dividing between the thoughts and intents there, and that the testimony thereof is ſurer
and

and clearer (as to the hearts in which it shines, and to them whose spiritual ears are opened to hear its voice) then any words and testimonies from without. And I am satisfied also, that they who are the Sheep of Christ, do thus hear the Shepherds Voice, and do know both the Voice behind them, when it comes after them to reprove their wandrings and direct their minds into the true Way, and also the voice before them, when the Shepherd (who is the Leader) putteth forth his Sheep, and goeth before them and they follow him, for they knew his Voice, John 10. 4. Yea, I have had the experience hereof in my own heart: for I have felt that work within, and that living sweet testimony of Gods Spirit in my own heart, which hath been more to me, then all that ever I heard or read, from without: so that I can truly say (with the Samaritans, John 4. 42.) Now I believe, not because of the testimonies or words I have heard from without, but from the evidence and demonstration of Life and of Gods holy Spirit in

my own heart. Nor can I see, how the Apostle Peter in this place, can prefer the Testimonies of the Prophets. (for that which is called the new Testament, was not yet written and added to the old) before this glorious immediate Testimony from God Almighty, which Christ was honoured with, and they were greatly honoured in being admitted to be Beholders and Witnesses of. Yet somewhat sticks with me, namely those words of the Apostle, ver. 20. 21. wherein he plainly seems to me to speak of the Scriptures or Writings of the Prophets, as if that had been the more sure Word of Prophecie, which in this place he had directed to. For why should he say thus, Knowing this first, &c. unless he had intended the same Word of Prophecie, which he had been speaking of before, and directing their minds how they might make use of that Word of Prophecie?

Ans^r. Peter was the Minister of the Circumcision, and he was to deal with people who were great Admirers and Studiers of the Letter. Therefore
though

though he, as well as *Paul* and *John* and the other Apostles (*Rom.* 10. and *Acts* 26. 18. and 1 *John* 1.) was to direct men to the Word within and Light within : yet he knew it was of great concernment to them, rightly to read and be able to understand the Letter without. Therefore having first directed them to the Word of prophesie, to the Path of the Just, which is the inward shining Light, to the Light which shines more and more in the dark place, to them that give heed to it : in the next place it was very proper, useful and necessary, to direct them how to read the Scriptures aright. For indeed, the Oracles of God were given to them, *Rom.* 3. 2. and they ought to be diligent in the reading of them, that they might understand the holy Prophecies and precious Promises, &c. and reap the hope and comfort of them, and be made Partakers of the divine Nature, which is the thing

thing promised. And not only to the *Jews*, but to the Christians gathered from among the *Gentiles* in that Age, were the Scriptures greatly useful; and so they are also to such as are gathered by the holy Spirit and Power of God in this Age. The Prophecies, the Judgments, the Promises, the Mercies, the Experience, &c. are all useful and profitable, to those that read and understand them in the Light of Gods holy Spirit. But the first thing needful is to turn a mans mind to the Light, that he may have somewhat to guide him, somewhat to stay his mind upon in reading the Scriptures, somewhat to open and unseal the holy and divine Words and Mysteries to him. For no man can truly and rightly understand the Scriptures, but as his mind is opened by the Lord, and the understanding of words and things given him. So that this is exceeding necessary to be known (after a man is turned to the Light and Word of Prophecie within, and comes to read the
 outward

outward Oracles and Testimonies of the holy Spirit; that all holy men spake not in their own wills; not in the will of the Flesh, not in the will of man; but as the Spirit of God gave them words and moved them to speak. And those words, Spoken by Gods Spirit, knoweth none but that Spirit which spake them. So that no man ought to venture by his private Spirit, to undertake to open and interpret those words; but he must first receive the same Word of Life, the same Spirit of Prophesie within, and wait upon him and learn to know his Voice, who openeth what and when he pleaseth to the sons of men, either of what he spake formerly, or of what he pleaseth to speak now. And so, when the same Word of Life speaks in a mans heart now, shewing things to come, either concerning a mans self or others, that man must be careful to retire and lie very low before the Lord, waiting
upon

upon him for the true understanding and right interpreting of his own words, else a man may easily mis-understand and mis-apply what was truly and rightly spoken. So that this is the right way of understanding the Words of Prophecie from the holy men of God in former Ages, and the Instructions of the Word of Life in the heart. *The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear him.* In the true fear the Ear is opened and the right Understanding given: but in the wisdom of the Flesh, and in the confidence thereof, it is easie erring at any time from the true sense and right use of that, which was opened and given by God, either for the souls own good, or for the good of others.

To Conclude this appeal: There is one consideration on my heart to propose to the serious and sober minded; and Oh that they might rightly consider and understand it. David
was

was a man after Gods own heart, a wise man, an inwardly exercised man, an experienced man, an holy, spiritual, heavenly man; a man who knew the inward, everlasting Kingdom, and had the Spirit of God, and witnessed his Truth in the inward parts. Can ye think that *David* did not know the Word and Commandment of Life within? Did not God write his Law in his heart? how else could he become a man after Gods own heart? Did not he witness the everlasting Covenant and the Law thereof, the new Law, the living Law, even the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus? Now when *David* said, *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*: What Law did he mean? What is the Law, which converts the soul to God? Can any thing less then an inward Power, an inward Light, an inward Law, an inward Life, then the inward drawings and teachings of Gods Spirit, convert the soul

to God? And what testimony is that, which makes wise the simple? Is it not the inward testimony? What made him wiser then the Ancients, and then his Teachers, who knew and could teach the Law outward? were they not the inward teachings and inward precepts of Gods holy Spirit from the Word of Life within, which doubtless was very nigh him, he being a man so exercised by Gods Spirit, and so formed after his heart? And what are those right Statutes, which rejoyce the heart? and the pure Commandment, which enlightens the eyes? and the clean fear, and the righteous Judgments? Are not these all things known within, and received within? Doth not God put his fear within, in the heart? Doth not God reveal his righteous Judgements within, against sin and iniquity? O how did *David* cry out, because of Gods dreadful judgements upon him for sin, and said, his

his Sore ran in the night, and he watered his Couch with his Tears: and in another place, *My Flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgements.* And when he speaketh so much (as in *Psal. 119.* of Gods Word, Gods Law, his Testimonies, Precepts, Statutes, Judgements, &c. what doth he speak of? Doth he speak of the outward, or inward ministration of the word in the heart? Doth he not speak of the inward writing? of the Law in the heart? of the Commandment in the heart? of the testimony of Life there? For he had the Testimony within, the Spirit within, the Law within, the Light within, the inward and spiritual Kingdom (wherein the holy dominion of God is revealed) he knew within: and so, believing, could speak of the power and glory thereof, and of Gods wondrous works, *Psal. 145.* And when he said, *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light*

Light unto my Path: What Word did he mean? Did he mean the Letter or Law outward? or the Word nigh in the mouth and heart, which *Moses* had testified of and directed the *Jews* to, and he himself had been very well acquainted with? When, again, he saith, *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?* and immediately giveth the answer, By taking heed according to thy word. Doth he mean the Letter without, or the Word within? What is it, that cleanseth the heart? that cleanseth the way? Is it any less then the Water of Life, then the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, then the Word and Life of Truth within? *Sanctifie them by thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* In the sense of that inwardly and obedience to it, is the renewing and Sanctification felt. And so this brings to be undefiled in the way, and to keep the testimonies of Life, and preserves from doing

(75)

doing iniquity. *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, saith he, who walk in the Law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his Testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity, &c.* Had he no experience of these things himself? Yea surely. He knew the holy heart, the pure heart, the new and heavenly Image, the heart after Gods own heart: and he knew what it was to walk in innocency, and to be kept out of Sin: Hear what he himself saith, Psal. 18. 21. &c. *For I have kept the Wayes of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his Judgements were before me, and I did not put away his Statutes from me. I was also upright before him: and I kept my self from mine iniquity: What was that? Was not that it which had most power over him, and was most apt to entangle and ensnare him? Now, he*

he that arrives here, he that doth this, that keeps himself from his iniquity, doubtless witnesseth great power and victory over lesser and smaller Sins. Was not *David* strong in the Lord and in the Power of his might? did not the Word of God abide in him? did not he overcome the wicked one by the Power thereof? How else could he walk thus in the Wayes of the Lord, as he expresseth, and keep himself from his iniquity?

Now, this Word of Life, these living Testimonies and Precepts, yea the everlasting Ordinances and Statutes of the new Covenant, with the sure mercies of *David*: which Word *Moses* had testified of and directed to, and *David* had experienced (it being the Pearl he had treasured up and hid in his heart) and which was the Word of Faith which *Paul* and the other Apostles preached and testified of, turn-
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ing men from darkness to this inward Light; I say, this Word, this living Word (and the inward Ministration thereof) God hath revealed and made manifest in this our day, and hath turned the minds of many to it, and is daily inviting men to *Shiloh's* Streams, to the living Waters, to the Light and Habitation of the Living. Blessed are they that hear the joyful sound, and come to the holy Mount and City of our God, where Life lives and reigns, and is fed on by all the living; who are Gods elect, Gods Heritage, Gods Vineyard of Red Wine, Gods enclosed Garden, whom he watcheth over night and day, and watereth every moment; and in whom he dwelleth and walketh, and is to them a God and Father, and maketh them daily sensible that they are his Servants, Children and Spouse, in whom is his great delight, and on whose hearts and fore-heads is written, *Holiness to the Lord*. Yea and the Lord will

will bless thee forever, *O Habitation of Justice and Mountain of Holiness*, and every tongue that riseth up in judgement against thee, will the Lord God condemn for evermore. This is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord, whom the Lord hath gathered by the Arm of his mighty Power (inwardly revealed and stretched forth in them and for them) and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

Postscript.

Postscript.

There is a Scripture now openeth in me, as it hath often done; and it hath been very sweet to my Taste; but I have not had freedom to give it forth to others; as at this time it is with me to do: It is that Scripture, Rom. 9. 18. Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will! have Mercy, and whom he will he Hardeneth.

NOW many apprehend from this Scripture, as I also formerly did, That God hath Chosen out a certain Number of Persons, on
F **whom**

whom he will have Mercy and Save by Christ Jesus the Lord; and that he hath passed over the rest, so that they were never intended to have any Benefit by Christ's death, as to their Eternal Salvation. This the wisdom of man, from the Letter of this Scripture and many other places, may easily apprehend and strongly reason for. But as the Lord openeth the mind, and men come to a sense of his Nature and Spirit, and his Intent in sending his Son, and receive the Key which opens the Truth as it is in Jesus; they will easily see that this is contrary to Gods Nature, and his Intent in sending his Son, and the universall Covenant of Light and Life, and the manifest Testimony of the Scriptures.

First, As touching the Nature of God. His Nature is Love; Love to all his Creatures. He would not have it goill with any of them. He
needeth

needeth not their Misery to make himself Happy. His Nature is to love, to Bless to Save: not to Destroy or Cut off, not to Afflict or Grieve the Children of men, not to Hurt either the Body or Soul of any. He preserveth man and Beast, *Psal. 36: 6.*

Secondly, As touching his sending his Son. He sent him in his Love to Mankind, to save Mankind. His Love was not to a few only: but he loved all his Creatures, he loved all lost Souls; and he sent his Son to save them all. He gave him Light to enlighten them all, and he gave him Life to quicken them all; only he dispenceth this in various wayes, according to the Infinite Wisdom and Good Pleasure of his Father.

So that, Thirdly, the Covenant of Light and Life is universal and nigh all Mankind, by which the darkest parts and corners of the Earth are at

sometimes enlightened, and feel somewhat of the Quickning Life. For the life is the light of men: and the light comes from the life, and is a quick, piercing, quickning, Light, conveying Warmth and Life, yea living Vertue into the darkest hearts, as it moves and finds entertainment in them.

Lastly, As for the Testimony of the Scriptures, it is very clear that God would have none to Perish. *All Souls are mine*, saith the Lord, Ezek. 18. 4. *I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dyeth*, ver. 32. and again, *As I live*, saith the Lord God, *I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked*, Chap. 33. 11. I have sent my Light to enlighten all men, and turn all men; and I would have all men receive it and be turned by it. I have shewed every man what is Good, and what I the Lord require of him: and I would have every man answer the Manifestation of my Light
and

and Spirit in him. Do ye not read Gods charge against the whole Earth, *Isa. 24. 5.* That they had transgressed the Law, changed the Ordinance, broken the everlasting Covenant? Why then they all had the Law, had the Ordinance, had the everlasting Covenant: and for this cause it is that the Curse and Judgement comes upon them, *ver. 6.* So that this was the Condemnation from the begining, and this is the Condemnation still, that Light is come into the World, and men love darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are Evil. Men are not condemned for want of Light from Christ Jesus; but because they do not believe in and obey that Light which they have from him: because they believe in the Darkness, believe in the dark spirit, believe in the dark power which riseth up against the Ministration of Light in the heart; and do not believe in that which is

given of God to discover and work it out. What should I multiply Scriptures for? That common Scripture is absolutely undeniable (as the Lord opens the heart unto the Simplicity of Truth, and keeps it out of the subtle, enchanting wisdom) *John 3. 16, 17. For God so Loved the World, that he gave his onely begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him, should not Perish, but have Everlasting Life. For God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World: But that the World through him might be saved.* What can be more naked and plain then these Words of Christ, who knew the very Heart of God in this particular, and plainly declares what it is: even not to condemn, not to destroy; but to save men from Condemnation and Destruction? And would Christ have so affectionately Wept over *Jerusalem*, had he known it to have been his
 Fathers

Fathers will and Determinate Coun-
 sel, that they should have perished,
 and not have been gathered and sa-
 ved by him ? I shall add but one
 Place more, where the Apostle
 (who knew God's Counsel, and
 understood the Mystery of Election
 and Reprobation, and had the Mind
 of Christ) saith expressly, that *God*
will have all men to be saved, and to
come unto the Knowledge of the Truth,
 1 Tim. 2. 4. What words can
 be spoken more plain and full ?
 And let People mind, that these
 words are far plainer and easier to
 be understood, then those Scriptures
 which treat of Election and Reproba-
 tion which is a deep Mystery ; and
 men must come to a growth in the
 Truth, before they can receive that
 capacity, which is necessary towards
 the understanding of them. But to
 open the thing a little, as it is now in
 my heart.

There

There hath been a threefold Dispensation of God to Mankind. A Dispensation of the Law to the *Jews*. A Dispensation of the Gospel (or promise, which was as well before the Law, as after it) to the called *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And a secret, hidden Dispensation of the Mystery of Grace, of the Mystery of Life and Salvation, which the Apostle calls the Mystery hid in the *Gentiles*, *Coloss. 1. 27*. For somewhat of God, somewhat of the Nature and Spirit of Christ, the Souls of all Mankind have had neer them to enlighten them, and to turn them from Satan's power to God; though it hath not been a thing known to them, but a Mystery hid in them.

Now, that God did cast off any *Jew* under the Law, or any whom he visits with the Grace and Power of the Gospel, from a meer, absolute

lute will in himself, because he would destroy them and have them perish, to shew forth the Praise of his Justice, and his absolute Sovereignty : this the true sense of Life in me denies. But all have a visit, of that which saves, heartily and in true Goodwill from God : and he that is turned to that which God hath sent to turn him, shall be owned and saved thereby. He that believeth in the Truth, in the Light, in the Word nigh ; even in the very lowest appearance of it (for the lowest appearance is the same thing in nature with the highest ; and the Grace is saving in its very lowest appearance, as well as in its highest) shall be saved thereby.

Now mark : God's Grace, God's Mercy, God's Love, God's Light, God's Spirit, God's Power, &c. is his own : And he may do with his own what he pleaseth. Now,
it

it being by this that he strives, converts and saves : And it being in his own will and good pleasure, how long he will strive and contend to save ; it lieth therefore absolutely in him, even in his own will, what he will do in this kind. He may take advantage against Rebellious Man, and cut him off when he will : And again, he may strive and raise true sense in a mans heart, and give Repentance and Pardon his Transgressions as long as he pleaseth ; Yea, he may so change a man's heart, and so Create him a new in Christ Jesus, and so bring him into Unity with the pure Seed, and to that estate in the Seed, as that he may have assurance he shall never be utterly cast off : But that though he should Sin, and Transgress the Holy Law of God's Spirit, his Iniquity shall be chastised with Stripes, and his Soul recovered
and

and brought back thereby, but not utterly rejected by the Lord. Now, it being thus, hath not God Mercy on whom he will? And doth not he Harden as he pleaseth? Did not God give up the *Jews* to hardness, after much striving with them? Did not God give up the *Gentiles* to hardness, and to vain imaginations concerning the true God, after they had rejected a measure of the True Knowledge? (*Rom. 1. 21.*) Have not the Vessels of Wrath, who are fitted to destruction, a day of much long-suffering first? *Rom. 9. 22.* Had not the Old World, who were fitted for that Destruction of the Floud, a long day of Patience and Forbearance from God, his Spirit reprovng of them and striving with them? To what end did God forbear them, and cause his Spirit to strive with them? Was it not to lead them to Repentance,

pentance, that thereby they might
 have Avoided that Destruction,
 which by their Rebellion and Stiff-
 ness of Spirit, against God's good
 and Tender Spirit, they were fitted
 for and exposed to? See *Rom. 2. 4.*
 So for *Cain*. How tenderly did God
 deal with him! how uprightly did
 God seek his good! Would not God
 have had him come to a true sense
 and repentance? Would not God
 have had him believed and offered in
 the Faith, and been accepted as his
 brother was? And for *Pharaoh*: God,
 indeed, was against that nature and
 Spirit in him, which oppressed *Israel*:
 but would not the Lord have had
 him denied and turned from that
 nature and Spirit, and let *Israel*
 go? God would have no man do
 evil and bring upon themselves De-
 struction, though in his just Judge-
 ment, he is many times provoked to
 give men up to that, which leadeth
 into

into and hardeneth in Evil. So not onely *Pharaoh*, but *Israel* also was given up to their own hearts Lusts, when they would none of the Lord, nor hearken to his counsel, *Psal. 81. 12.* But, saith the Lord, O that it had been otherwise ! *O that my People had hearkened unto me, &c.* it should then have been otherwise with them, *ver. 13. &c.*

So that God, of himself, doth not desire the Destruction of his Creature ; nor doth he desire to harden them, or to give them up to a deluding spirit, that they might be damned : but men first refuse the Truth and turn from it, or let it go, not receiving it in the love of it, or not liking to retain the knowledge of it (which is Death to the man's corrupt nature, spirit, will and wisdom, and such a Cross and Yoke, as he is in no wise willing to bear :) and then the Lord, in his just
Judg-

Judgement, gives them up to the Deceitfulness of Sin, to be hardened by it. Now this liveth in God's own Breast when and to whom to do it, according to his own Will, and according to his own Wisdom and Counsel, so that it may be truly and properly said, *He hath mercy and Compassion on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth.* But that God hath determined to harden any, without giving them a Day of Mercy; or that it is Gods Will and determinate Counsel, that men should reject the Day of his Mercy and precious Invitation, that they might be hardened by him and perish: This is not God's Truth, but mens Mis-Apprehensions upon true words, gathering Meanings therefrom in their own wisdom, and not waiting upon God till he cause the true Light to shine in them, and thereby give them the True Know-

Knowledge and Understanding.

Therefore, since there is such Mercy in God towards all, and he hath given all men a Day of Visitation, greater or lesser; yea, since of late he hath caused his Light to shine forth, and given this Age such a Visitation, as many Ages have not had: O let men take heed how they close their Eyes, stop their Ears and harden their Hearts against it; lest they provoke God to give them up to their own imaginary, conceited, fleshly comprehensive knowledge of the Letter, and so seal them up in that hardness of heart and deafness of Spirit, which they first gave themselves up to. For the Letter without the Spirit killeth: And so doth all literal knowledge: and there needs no greater Curse from God (it will sufficiently avenge the Cause of his Reproached Light and holy Covenant of Life in Christ

Christ Jesus, now abundantly revealed and made manifest) then to close mens Eyes, and stop their Ears, and harden their Hearts (in their Litteral Knowledges and Practises) from beholding and partaking of the precious Life and Vertue of this holy and Living Ministration in Christ Jesus the Lord, wherewith God visiteth and redeemeth his people.

Indeed the Physitian is come inwardly and spiritually, and he inwardly heals and restoreth his People; faithfully, seeking after the Sick, the Distressed, the Broken, the Wounded; pouring Oyl into their Wounds, and healing them. But there are some, who are so sound and whole in their notional Apprehensions and Practises, that they have no need of the Physitian: and then the Physitian passeth by, as unworthy of him, and whom he intendeth shall have no share with him. *Ephraim is joyned to Idols* (he is well, he hath enough,

enough, he hath no need of me) *let
 him alone*, saith the Lord. I will pour
 out the choice Vertue of my Spiritual
 Life, and redeeming Power, among
 my gathered Sheep and Lambs, who
 have need thereof and will rejoyce
 therein. These will know my Voice,
 these will justifie the appearance of my
 spirit and power, these love the savour
 of my Anointing and precious Oynt-
 ment which runs down from the Head
 upon all the Living Body: and these
 shall have it. These understand how
 I have Mercy on whom I will, and
 whom I will I Hearden: and it is my
 will to have Mercy on these, my once
 greatly Distressed Ones, and to destroy
 (inwardly to destroy, O who knows
 what that means) the fat and the strong,
 and to feed them with judgement. O
 that men did know to whom the Mer-
 cy, and to whom the Judgement be-
 longs. To the wisdom of the Flesh,
 to the wise Comprehenders of the
 G things

things of God after the Flesh, is the judgement: to the Poor, to the Distressed, to the Broken in Spirit (not to them that are at ease in their Literal Knowledge, but to the Mourners in *Sion* after the holy God, and his living Power and Righteousness) is the Everlasting Gospel, the Mercy, the Love, the Peace, the binding-up, the Redemption which is by Christ Jesus, the living Minister in the holy Sanctuary of our God.

THE END

